1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

European dress was
291 ever more generally adopted in the larger towns, and spread significantly to urbanized tribesmen. Among upper-class women, though the veil was still almost universal among Muslims, Western
556 clothing was worn increasingly. The desire for material progress was reflected in the eagerness of the rich to acquire motor-cars, gramophones, and the toys and amenities of Europe; but inability to pay for these gave rise to demands for limitless credit.

466 Interest at the International Labour Office in conditions among 'Iraq's industrial workers led to some answering efforts to produce suitable legislation; but the smallness of this class in an unindustrialized country made European criteria and standards largely inapplicable. The first seeds were sown, however, of a social interest in labour matters.

744 To the whole community and to urban society in particular with its still prevalent poverty and low purchasing power the Government's Health and Education services contributed valuably. The former improved its quarantine and pilgrim services, multiplied its countryside dispensaries, improved its specialist institutes, and dealt well with the cholera epidemics of 1927 and 1931. It was significant that out-patient attendances, less than 750,000 in 1921, had more than doubled by 1926 and quadrupled by 1930. In response to foreign purchasers' outcry, the Health Department imposed measures of cleanliness in the date industry. In 1927 it founded the Royal Medical College; this, a medical school of good standards, took at once a high place in 'Iraq's higher and professional education. A School of Pharmacy had existed since 1922. The Government adhered during these years to a number of international conventions on medical as on many other matters.

871 The 'Iraqi schools seemed to foreign observers at this period—and indeed at others—to lack something of the best spirit of education. There was criticism of lax discipline, uncritical self-flattery, a worship of modernity and materialism; politics pervaded too many of the schools, always in the form of a crude xenophobia eager for street demonstrations. Nevertheless, an educational system grew and multiplied its facilities, fought for budget allotments, developed an Inspectorate, codified its Regulations. A Hygiene Directorate was formed in the Education Ministry, later
[562] greatly to develop. The year 1930 saw the first Government secondary schools for girls; the days of Muslim hesitation over female education were almost over. For boys the secondary period was prolonged from four to five years, three 'intermediate' and two 'senior'. The dispatch of students for higher education abroad grew commoner. Technical education remained unpopular: it did not lead quickly enough to the goal chiefly envisaged, a Govern-

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

power station at Baghdad was the property of a British company, that of Basra belonged to the Port, while Kirkuk was supplied with current by its all-providing oil company.

The revised labour legislation of 1942, the activity of the Ministry of Social Affairs, interest in International Labour Office literature and standards, and the employment since 1949 of a British expert on labour questions were guarantees that, though part of the Code was not applied, progress was real towards an effective interest in urban labour conditions and safeguards; it extended to trade union organization, the establishment of Labour Exchanges, housing schemes and welfare, and plans for social security whose realization was delayed only by their high cost. Meanwhile limited welfare facilities—dispensaries, canteens, clubs, sports grounds—were offered voluntarily by a few employers such as the Port, the Railways, and the more considerable industrial companies. They were provided on a much larger scale, and as part of a comprehensive organization, by the oil companies.

In domestic living standards, if it was true that the modernization and Westernization of the urban middle and lower-middle classes still left 'the poor' little better provided in their own homes than fifty years earlier, yet the proportion of households able to rise above their old deficiencies had much increased, and the private life of the middle as of the upper classes showed that in their domestic equipment and housing, hygiene, clothes, and range of interests great changes had been somehow effected in the last two generations. In men's and women's clothing, in the appearance and conduct of households, the serving of meals, and more generally in family and social life, Western ways had gained much ground. Resistance to the emancipation of women was now narrowing; the Muslim veil was frequently discarded; women learned and taught, entered the professions of medicine and law, followed politics (including Communism), took part in social work, and through their Women's Society were heard to demand the franchise. Circles, however, where women were strictly secluded were still considerable, and included the households of many leading notables and the royal family itself.

Social life was diversified by increased visiting between families, by the cinematograph, by cabarets of both Oriental and Western type, by casinos and modernized cafés. The traditional coffee shop kept its place for the male members of all classes and, within the social grade for which each catered, was still the club and business centre of thousands. Club life had developed to include the exclusive social clubs of the rich, the middle-class professional clubs of the lawyers, Army officers, and officials of various branches of Government, and a dozen sporting clubs; but the

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

SOCIAL FACTORS

Alongside these economic and administrative problems are a number of social factors which inhibit educational development.

Illiteracy and Health Problems. For many years it is likely that illiteracy among the adult population, and the state of the public health, will constitute obstacles to the extension of primary education, especially in the rural areas. The reasons for this are obvious. Parents who are themselves illiterate and living at a low standard of life are not easily persuaded that schooling is a worthwhile substitute for the work of their children. Neither are they able to provide in their homes those standards and values which, if the training of the schoolroom is not be negatived, are such necessary reinforcements to public education. Similarly, the prevalence of epidemic and endemic disease, together with inadequate sanitation, also contributes to a major health problem which must be taken into account in attempting to ensure regular school attendance.

Yet while obstacles of this kind exist, they are diminishing. The Public Health Service is developing slowly but surely, and one has only to see a doctor at work in a remote rural area to appreciate the devoted service which is beginning to contribute to a solution of some of the health problems. Again, although illiteracy and poverty are not the best friends of education, one has only to visit remote little village schools to realize that some of the poorest parents are making sacrifices to send their children to school.

Before compulsory education can be achieved, however, even assuming that the money for it will be forthcoming, a vigorous attack on adult illiteracy will be essential. To this end, what is needed in the rural areas is a type of school which, in addition to meeting the needs of the children, provides in a practical and non-academic fashion realistic fundamental education for the parents. The teacher training institutions would make a most valuable contribution if, quite apart from training the future teachers to attend to the needs of children, they also initiated them into the more practical techniques of teaching illiterates the fundamentals of better living.

The Position of Women and Children. Another obstacle to educational and social development which is often quoted is the position of women in a society which is predominantly Muslim. Traditionally women are discouraged from taking part in public life, and this attitude is bound to be reflected in education.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

562 872 But this obstacle can be exaggerated. As a glance at the figures showing the growth of primary education in Iraq indicates, the proportion of girls to boys attending primary schools is not high, but their enrolment is steadily increasing. Although most of the large urban schools are single sex schools, Iraq has the distinction of having many co-educational village schools. The growing number of kindergartens are co-educational. In all the institutions of higher education young men and women work together.

The emancipation of women in Iraq still has a long way to go, but convincing signs of it are evident. It would, nevertheless, be a considerable advance if the Ministry of Education were to encourage the recruitment of a number of women to the staffs of the boys' primary schools. From visits to many Iraqi primary schools it is evident that the standards of the women teachers in matters of personal cleanliness of the children, care and decoration of the school premises, general decorum and pleasant social conduct are higher than those of their men colleagues. Their influence in boys' schools would be most salutary.

464 872 The position of children is, of course, difficult when parents, especially in the rural areas, are dependent upon the labour of even very young children. Yet an increasing number of poor parents appear to be sending their children to school. It would be a great inducement to more and regular school attendance if means could be devised of providing free midday meals for some of the children, especially in the village schools. At one of the more modern primary schools in Baghdad attractively cooked and served midday meals are provided, but this is a school attended mainly by children from comfortable homes where the parents can afford to pay for this service. In the rural areas, however, simple food is not expensive, cooking devices and service are cheap, and it should be possible to provide free meals for the needy children at relatively low cost.

It should be noted that effective child labour legislation does not exist in Iraq. Until the time comes when such legislation can be enacted and enforced, compulsory education will be most difficult to apply.

162 166 871 *Tribal Organization and Mobility of Population.* But the most formidable obstacles of all are those related to tribal organization and mobility of population. There are two particular sets of problems, those of the tribes who are still in a nomadic state, and those of the people who are in the transitional stage of semi-settlement. Between them, it is estimated that these nomadic and semi-settled peoples number nearly 2,000,000 persons, roughly 300,000 of whom are children of primary school age.

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

871 only in relation to some predetermined goal. The Mission considers that this goal should be to bring primary education to all children of school age; currently they number about 750,000 but only 175,000 are actually in school. Despite the growing recognition of the value of education, it would be unrealistic to suppose that this goal could be achieved without compulsory attendance. In many cases the value of education will be appreciated only after children are brought into contact with it through some measure of compulsion. This will be true particularly of education in rural [562] areas and of education of girls. In 1948-49, for instance, there were only 43,000 girls in primary schools as compared with about 132,000 boys. Moreover, compulsory attendance is necessary not merely to get children into school initially but also to make sure they will stay there long enough to acquire permanent literacy and the modicum of basic education necessary to improve and enrich their lives. In the cities educational facilities have been much more easily available than in the country, but without compulsion there has been a sharp drop in attendance with each successive school grade. Dr. Akrawi in his work, *Education in the Arab Countries*, presents figures showing the following distribution of enrollment in primary schools in 1944-45:

Grade I	Grade II	Grade III	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI
32%	18.3%	14.9%	12.8%	11.7%	10.1%

This suggests that there is a high percentage of wastage in the first year and that the roll in Grade VI is less than one third of that in Grade I. In fact, there were only 9,500 children in Grade VI as compared with 22,000 in Grade I six years before. More recent figures for certain specific areas show some improvement but it is not so marked as to alter the general situation. Thus, in the city of Baghdad where educational awakening is greatest and educational facilities most generous, out of 6,970 children in Grade I in 1945-46, only 5,315 passed on to Grade II in 1947-48 and 3,587 to Grade VI in 1950-51; i.e., about 50 percent dropped out before completing the primary stage. In the city of Kerbela only 209 out of 645 children in Grade I reached Grade VI, a wastage of about 66 percent.

The investment in the education of children who remain in school no more than three years represents a dead loss. Even that

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH 1

[Marsh Arabs]

The local governor is an efficient and more or less benevo-
511 lent man and seemed to be very well liked. The group as a whole enjoys a degree of prosperity and comfort most unusual for an Arab community. Everybody has enough to eat and enough to wear and a good house to live in. Crops seem to be quite reliable. If the wheat and barley harvest fails, the rice does not. Taxes are light and the local government good.

515 The most conspicuous difference from the typical agri-
463 cultural community in Arabia lies in the fact that here the old equality of the desert is preserved. There is no class of rich citizens who outshine their fellows. There are a few merchants of a small sort. Amara, the nearest city, is so close to the town we visited that the shops were very small, most of the trading being done in the larger city. We saw few artisans. The community seemed to be free from caste divisions and to enjoy a spirit of equality and brotherhood much like that of the Bedouins themselves.

562 Another surprising thing is the freedom of all classes. The women have discarded the veil completely and associate with the men freely, being seen on the street apparently under no restraint whatever. This is a refreshing contrast to the other communities of Arabs; indeed the Marsh Arabs are far ahead of even the Bedouins in this respect. These women buy and sell in the bazaar and appear to participate in all the activities of the town with no hesitation whatever. They visited the temporary dispensary that we set up and in their self-assertion were
795 sometimes harder to manage than the men. It is interesting to note that these Arabs are all Shiahs. "No," said the guard that accompanied us from Ahwaz as we were coming in for a visit, "there are no infidels in all this district. Every one is a Shiah."

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
IRAQ MHI

Chapter 9

PUBLIC PRIMARY EDUCATION

1872

FREE public primary education extends over six grades and is offered to any Iraqi child who has reached the age of six years. In theory, primary education is compulsory in areas where adequate facilities exist; in practice, in the few instances in which the Ministry of Education has declared attendance to be compulsory in given areas, social and economic conditions, together with inadequate planning, have made the ruling ineffective.

Except for certain modifications in schools in Kurdish or Turkish districts, or in the few so-called "model rural primary schools," the primary course is uniform throughout Iraq. Thus, a child moving from one district to another, from urban to rural or tribal district, is not handicapped by basic variation in the curriculum.

[562 178]

To a large extent, primary education segregates boys from girls, with boys schools taught by men and girls schools by women. The Ministry of Education, however, has made considerable progress in recent years, especially in the cities, in overcoming the traditional prejudice against coeducation. In 1933–34 the Ministry opened kindergartens, later called "junior schools," which admitted both boys and girls and employed women teachers. In the larger cities, particularly in Baghdad, the kindergartens soon were enlarged to include first- and second-grade classes. Rather hesitant about adding classes at first, the Ministry was encouraged by the popularity of this experiment to enlarge the program. By 1938–39 junior schools had sprung up in the capitals of almost all the provinces, and in spite of the war these schools continued to flourish, increasing in number and attendance until in 1944–45 there were 56 schools attended by 8,512 children, 4,322 boys and 4,190 girls. At the present time the typical junior school consists of the first four grades and parallels the work of those grades in the public primary school. A few junior schools offer a five- or six-year course. Apart from these planned coeducational schools, coeducation at the primary level is tolerated in many rural villages where no girls schools or only incomplete ones exist.